REMARKS

This Amendment and Response to Non-Final Office Action is being submitted in response to the non-final Office Action mailed August 3, 2005. Claims 1-5, 7, and 9-21 are pending in the Application. Claims 1-5, 7, and 9-21 stand rejected. Specifically, Claims 1-5, 7, 9, 10, 13, 14, and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Judd et al. (US 5,465,251) in view of Saleh et al. (US 6,801,496). Claim 12 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Judd et al. and Saleh et al. in view of "Official Notice". Finally, Claims 15-17 and 19-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Judd et al. and Saleh et al. as applied to Claims 14 and 18, and further in view of "Official Notice".

In response to these rejections, Claims 1, 5, 14, and 18 have been amended to clarify the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. These amendments are fully supported in the Specification, Drawings, and Claims of the Application and no new matter has been added. As a result of the amendments, and in view of the following remarks, Applicant submits that the Application is now in condition for allowance and respectfully requests such action.

Rejection of Claims 1-5, 7, 9, 10, 13, 14, and 18 Under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) - Judd et al. and Saleh et al.:

Claims 1-5, 7, 9, 10, 13, 14, and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Judd et al. (US 5,465,251) in view of Saleh et al. (US 6,801,496).

In response to this rejection, independent Claims 1, 5, 14, and 18 have been amended to recite, in relevant part, a counter (or a method incorporating a counter) that is incremented by a preselected step in value at each node a message packet is

forwarded to along a chain network until the counter reaches an initial value, thereby indicating that a destination node has been reached, wherein the counter is incremented a number of times that is equal to the number of nodes the message packet is forwarded to along the chain network. Thus, the counter is incremented at each and every node the message packet is forwarded to. In essence, the counter counts the number of nodes from a source node to which the message packet is to be delivered, regardless of what type of intervening nodes are present.

Neither Judd et al. nor Saleh et al. disclose, teach, or suggest this limitation. In fact, Judd et al. teach that, at a single-port node, If Hi_digit = 0h then Do; Accept the frame; Interpret the remainder of the address field as a channel; End; Else reject the frame (see Scheme A, column 7; similarly see Scheme B, column 9). Thus, no incrementing or decrementing of the "counter" takes place at a single-port node. Likewise, Judd et al. teach that, at a switch node, If Hi_digit = 0h then Do; If Lo_digit = 0h then Do; Accept the frame; Interpret the remainder of the address field as a channel; Else Do; Select Output_port = (Input_port + Lo_digit) Modulo 16; Delete the first address byte; Forward the frame via Output_port; End; End; Else reject the frame (see Scheme A, column 8; similarly see Scheme B, column 9). Thus, no incrementing or decrementing of the "counter" takes place at a switch node. In other words, the "counter" selectively "counts" only some of the nodes between a source node and a node to which the message packet is to be delivered, based upon what type of intervening nodes are present.

This deficiency of Judd et al. is not remedied by Saleh et al. Saleh et al. teach that the HOP_COUNT specifies the distance, as a number of hops, between an originating node and a receiving node and the HOP_COUNT field is incremented by one for each hop (from node to node) traversed by the LSA instance (see column 8, lines 34-46), but only within the context of a "zone" consisting of neighboring nodes (see column 4, lines 8-26). In fact, Saleh et al. teach that the nodes within each zone are only required to

maintain information about their own zone, stating "[t]here would then be no need for a zone's topology to be known outside its boundaries, and non-boundary nodes within a zone need not be aware of the network's topology external to their respective zones" (again, see column 4, lines 8-26). The present invention contemplates that a message packet may traverse a plurality of "zones" and, therefore, so should a hop count.

Thus, Applicant submits that amended independent Claims 1, 5, 14, and 18 now recite elements/limitations not disclosed, taught, or suggested by Judd et al. or Saleh et al. Therefore, Applicant submits that the rejection of independent Claims 1, 5, 14, and 18, as well as dependent Claims 2-4, 7, 9, 10, and 13, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Judd et al. in view of Saleh et al. has now been overcome and respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

Rejection of Claim 12 Under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) - Judd et al., Saleh et al., and "Official Notice":

Claim 12 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Judd et al. and Saleh et al. in view of "Official Notice".

The above arguments apply with equal force to dependent Claim 12. Therefore, Applicant submits that the rejection of Claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Judd et al. and Saleh et al. in view of "Official Notice" has now been overcome and respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

Rejection of Claims 15-17 and 19-21 Under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) - Judd et al., Saleh et al., and "Official Notice":

Claims 15-17 and 19-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Judd et al. and Saleh et al. as applied to Claims 14 and 18, and further in view of "Official Notice".

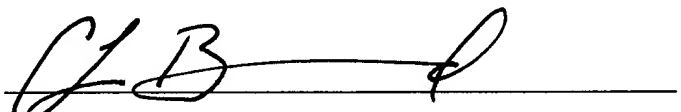
The above arguments apply with equal force to dependent Claims 15-17 and 19-21. Therefore, Applicant submits that the rejection of Claims 15-17 and 19-21 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Judd et al. and Saleh et al. as applied to Claims 14 and 18, and further in view of "Official Notice", has now been overcome and respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Applicant would like to thank Examiner for the attention and consideration accorded the present Application. Should Examiner determine that any further action is necessary to place the Application in condition for allowance, Examiner is encouraged to contact undersigned Counsel at the telephone number, facsimile number, address, or email address provided below. It is not believed that any fees for additional claims, extensions of time, or the like are required beyond those that may otherwise be indicated in the documents accompanying this paper. However, if such additional fees are required, Examiner is encouraged to notify undersigned Counsel at Examiner's earliest convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: November 3, 2005



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